

SF Chronicle FEB 26 1977
**Bell's Bid for
New Data in
King Case**

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**Bell Wants to
Quiz Ray on
King Killing**

Washington

Attorney General Griffin Bell said yesterday he would like to question James Earl Ray about the murder of Martin Luther King Jr.

Bell was asked by reporters at a breakfast meeting whether he believes all possible evidence in the 1968 assassination of the civil rights leader has been assembled.

"I'd like to talk to Ray," Bell said.

Many questions remain unanswered about Ray's motive, his source of funds and other matters since he pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 99 years in prison without any evidence being brought out in a trial.

Ray refused to be questioned by Justice Department investigators who reviewed the FBI's probe of the slaying in Memphis. The investigators reported last week they could not find evidence of anyone having helped Ray in the assassination.

Maryhill Wall, Justice Department public information director, said Bell would either like to interview Ray or have it done for him by someone who "would ask the right questions."

United Press

Washington

Attorney General Griffin Bell says he would be willing to give James Earl Ray some form of "consideration" if he will clear up unanswered questions about the murder of Martin Luther King Jr.

Ray, serving a 99-year Tennessee state prison term, refused to talk to a Justice Department task force that recently reviewed the FBI's original investigation of King's murder in 1968.

By pleading guilty, Ray avoided a trial that possibly would have brought out more evidence about his motive and his resources.

The task force concluded that Ray acted alone. But left unclear was the source of Ray's funds during the year between his escape from Missouri state prison and King's murder.

Marvin Wall, Justice Department public information director, was asked by reporters yesterday to elaborate on Bell's comment Thursday that he would like to question Ray about the murder.

Wall was asked if Bell would be willing to give Ray some form of consideration as an inducement to talk.

He said the attorney general told him he would "be willing to entertain such an idea. If we came to the conclusion he was making a clean breast, then we'd see about consideration."

Bell has not discussed just what kind of consideration he has in mind, Wall said, noting that Ray, as a state prisoner, is not under federal jurisdiction.

But Bell believes this could be worked out with state authorities in Tennessee, Wall added.

United Press